WRITING FOR THE MASS MEDIA  
Communication 230-006  
FALL 2006

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COURSE DESCRIPTION  
This is primarily a news writing and reporting course. It examines what news is—and why news is. Guided by the principles of journalism, you will learn about the style, structure, and fundamentals of news writing. You will learn by doing exercises in your book and by doing various writing and reporting assignments.  

This course won’t be limited to print-style writing, however. This course is about writing for the “mass media,” so we will also look at radio, television, and online news writing, as well as public relations and advertising writing.  

The goals of the course are that you will become more knowledgeable about the news media and the mass media in general, that you will gain a better understanding and appreciation of what is involved in news writing and reporting, and that your writing and journalistic skills will improve.  

ATTENDANCE POLICY  
While attendance will not be taken every class, attendance (excessive absences will be noticed, believe me!) and participation are factored into your final grade. Missed and late homework and other assignments will result in lower grades. I don’t mind being called or emailed if you are going to miss a class. If you are going to miss a class try to bring me your homework before the class you are going to miss. However, as a policy, I do not accept work via email. You have to turn it in during class when due or deliver it to my office or the Communication Department.  

TESTS AND GRADES  
Your grade will be determined by how you do on: 1) tests; 2) homework; 3) other writing assignments; and 4) class participation and attendance. Your homework assignments will receive grades of check plus, check, or check minus. Your marks will be added together to form your grade for this part of the class. Homework turned in one class period late will automatically receive a check minus. Homework will not be accepted after that point. You will have two “regular style” tests and
then two writing/reporting tests. Regular tests consist of multiple choice, true/false, terms/definitions, proper word usage; rewrites; copy editing; writing full article
Test grading scale: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+-- 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-77; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F—59 and below (note: last two tests will receive letter grades)

FINAL GRADE DETERMINATION
Four tests 80 percent
Book homework and other assignments 15 percent
Participation and attendance 5 percent

Final Grades: A (Superior)=4.0; A-=3.7; B+ (Very Good)=3.3; B (Good)=3.0; B-=2.7; C+ (Fair)=2.3; C=2.0; C-=1.7; D+=1.3; D ( Barely Acceptable/Passing)=1.0; D-=.70; F (Failure)=0.0

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES
You can have points added to your test scores by writing news articles on communication and media-related speakers and events at College of Charleston this semester. Up to three points can be added to your lowest test scores. Maximum three per student.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)
Please bring book to every class
***Note: homework for each chapter is not listed; will be assigned during class***

Week 1—August 23
• Course introduction; syllabus; student info sheets
• Initial writing “test”: interview people and write a 300-500 word article about the college’s new grading scale (due date TBA)

Week 2—August 28
• Chapter 20, Communication Law, and Chapter 21, Ethics

Week 3—September 4
• Chapter 22, Careers
• Preview Chapter 1, The Basics: Format and AP Style, and Chapter 2, Grammar and Spelling

Week 4—September 11
• Five Year Anniversary of 9/11 news judgment and writing exercises
• Continue Chapters 1 and 2
• Preview Chapter 3, Newswriting Style, and Chapter 4, The Language of News

Week 5—September 18
• Continue Chapters 3 and 4
• Preview Chapter 5, Selecting and Reporting the News

Week 6—September 25
• Continue Chapter 5
• Review for Test I (test is Monday, Oct. 2) which covers Chapters 20-22 and 1-5

Week 7—October 2 (Note: October 4 is last day to withdraw with a “W” grade)
• Monday, Oct. 2: Test I on Chapters 20-22 and 1-5
• Chapter 6, Basic News Leads

Week 8—October 9
• Continue Chapter 6
• Discuss Chapter 7, Alternative Leads, and Chapter 8, The Body of a News Story

Week 9—October 16 (Note: Midterm grades are due October 18)
• Discuss Chapter 9, Quotations and Attribution, and Chapter 10, Interviews

Week 10—October 23
• Discuss Chapter 12, Speeches and Meetings
• Start to review for Test II which is on Friday, November 3

Week 11—October 30
• Review for Test II to cover Ch. 6-10 and 12
• Friday, November 3—Test II on Chapters 6-10 and 12
• Start to discuss Test III articles project

Week 12—November 6 (no class Monday because of Fall Break)
• Continue to discuss Test III articles due on Monday, November 20. Test III will consist of you writing three different news articles: 1) a meeting or event story; 2) an issue/controversy story; and 3) a profile or human interest story. These stories, to be turned in together, are due Wednesday, April 12

Week 13—November 13
• Review Chapters 13-16
• Continue to discuss Test III articles

Week 14—November 20 (no classes on Wednesday and Friday due to Thanksgiving)
• Monday, November 20—Test III articles due
Week 15—November 27
  • Discuss Test IV—Publicity Project (news release-flyer-radio “spot”)
    due on our exam date, Monday, Dec. 11
  • Discuss Chapter 18, Writing for Broadcast and Chapter 19, The News
    Media and PR Practitioners
  • Show how to use recording equipment at Student Media Center

Week 16—December 4 (Monday, December 4 is our last class)
  • Continue Chapters 18 and 19
  • Continue discussing Test IV Publicity Project due on exam date below

EXAM DATE: Monday, Dec. 11 12-3: Test IV Publicity Project is due on this day
             (Final Grades are due Friday, December 15)